



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Note takers and participants recorded extensive stakeholder feedback during the Muscogee County ESSA meeting. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Accountability Common Themes

1. Accountability metrics are confusing for parents and stakeholders wondered if there were too many metrics overall. They suggested that the state make an effort to simplify the reports and communicate the data more clearly.
2. Very few stakeholders felt the rating system accurately reflected school performance. They felt that the rating system does not take into account a wide array of variables that affect performance including curriculum changes, difficulties in tracking transient students and external factors such as poverty and family situation.

Assessment Common Themes

1. Stakeholders felt that the role of assessment should be to measure student understanding, drive instruction and determine quality of teaching and school. Assessments should provide individual feedback about each student and show student growth over time.
2. Computer tests raise some concern, particularly when applied to early grades who may not be familiar with them. Make sure the technology and infrastructure are in place and robust before testing.
3. Formative assessment approaches are attractive because they provide real time feedback for students and teachers without the anxiety of high stakes summative testing.
4. Focus should be on learning – assessment should inform and not lead.

Educator and Leader Development Common Themes

1. Teachers and principals need strong content knowledge, pedagogical and leadership skills and dispositions that generate flexibility, openness and a passion for teaching and learning.
2. There are significant barriers to providing students with equal access to effective teachers and principals including economic and limited resources, communications, state oversight (or lack thereof) and systemic issues relating to teacher and student supports. These barriers have a strong effect on school culture and morale.
3. Partnerships have been an effective support for educator and leader development and should be expanded, particularly to teacher pre-service institutions and community organizations.

Federal Programs to Support School Improvement Common Themes

1. Invest in people not things - leadership development and instructional support should be prioritized over programs.
2. Partnerships have helped support continued development and school improvement but need to be more widespread and accessible.
3. Create multiple avenues/options for two-way communication between state, district, school and parents/students.

Education of the Whole Child Common Themes

1. Increase opportunities and funding for social, emotional and physical activity for all students.
2. Generate opportunities to fuel students' interests and passions through electives, art, inquiry-based learning and student-centered instruction.

3. There should be greater investment in mental health supports for students including more counselors, mental health screenings, family support and early identification of student needs.
4. Increase teacher training, more flexibility with class scheduling, and increase pathway exploration in elementary school (or in grades before high school).